

Chapter 7B.
Juvenile Code.
SUBCHAPTER I. ABUSE, NEGLECT, DEPENDENCY.

Article 1.

Purposes; Definitions.

§ 7B-100. Purpose.

This Subchapter shall be interpreted and construed so as to implement the following purposes and policies:

- (1) To provide procedures for the hearing of juvenile cases that assure fairness and equity and that protect the constitutional rights of juveniles and parents;
- (2) To develop a disposition in each juvenile case that reflects consideration of the facts, the needs and limitations of the juvenile, and the strengths and weaknesses of the family.
- (3) To provide for services for the protection of juveniles by means that respect both the right to family autonomy and the juveniles' needs for safety, continuity, and permanence; and
- (4) To provide standards for the removal, when necessary, of juveniles from their homes and for the return of juveniles to their homes consistent with preventing the unnecessary or inappropriate separation of juveniles from their parents.
- (5) To provide standards, consistent with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, P.L. 105-89, for ensuring that the best interests of the juvenile are of paramount consideration by the court and that when it is not in the juvenile's best interest to be returned home, the juvenile will be placed in a safe, permanent home within a reasonable amount of time. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1090, s. 1; 1998-202, s. 6; 1999-456, s. 60; 2003-140, s. 5.)

§ 7B-101. Definitions.

As used in this Subchapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following words have the listed meanings:

- (1) Abused juveniles. – Any juvenile less than 18 years of age (i) who is found to be a minor victim of human trafficking under G.S. 14-43.15 or (ii) whose parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker:
 - a. Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the juvenile a serious physical injury by other than accidental means;
 - b. Creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of serious physical injury to the juvenile by other than accidental means;
 - c. Uses or allows to be used upon the juvenile cruel or grossly inappropriate procedures or cruel or grossly inappropriate devices to modify behavior;
 - d. Commits, permits, or encourages the commission of a violation of the following laws by, with, or upon the juvenile: first-degree forcible rape, as provided in G.S. 14-27.21; second-degree forcible rape as provided

- in G.S. 14-27.22; statutory rape of a child by an adult as provided in G.S. 14-27.23; first-degree statutory rape as provided in G.S. 14-27.24; first-degree forcible sex offense as provided in G.S. 14-27.26; second-degree forcible sex offense as provided in G.S. 14-27.27; statutory sexual offense with a child by an adult as provided in G.S. 14-27.28; first-degree statutory sexual offense as provided in G.S. 14-27.29; sexual activity by a substitute parent or custodian as provided in G.S. 14-27.31; sexual activity with a student as provided in G.S. 14-27.32; unlawful sale, surrender, or purchase of a minor, as provided in G.S. 14-43.14; crime against nature, as provided in G.S. 14-177; incest, as provided in G.S. 14-178; preparation of obscene photographs, slides, or motion pictures of the juvenile, as provided in G.S. 14-190.5; employing or permitting the juvenile to assist in a violation of the obscenity laws as provided in G.S. 14-190.6; dissemination of obscene material to the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.7 and G.S. 14-190.8; displaying or disseminating material harmful to the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.14 and G.S. 14-190.15; first and second degree sexual exploitation of the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.16 and G.S. 14-190.17; promoting the prostitution of the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-205.3(b); and taking indecent liberties with the juvenile, as provided in G.S. 14-202.1;
- e. Creates or allows to be created serious emotional damage to the juvenile; serious emotional damage is evidenced by a juvenile's severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior toward himself or others; or
 - f. Encourages, directs, or approves of delinquent acts involving moral turpitude committed by the juvenile.
 - g. Repealed by Session Laws 2018-75, s. 5(a), effective December 1, 2018.

This term includes any juvenile less than 18 years of age who is a victim or is alleged to be a victim of an offense under G.S. 14-43.11, 14-43.12, or 14-43.13, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-136, s. 1, effective October 1, 2015, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date.
- (3) Caretaker. – Any person other than a parent, guardian, or custodian who has responsibility for the health and welfare of a juvenile in a residential setting. A person responsible for a juvenile's health and welfare means a stepparent, foster parent, an adult member of the juvenile's household, an adult relative entrusted with the juvenile's care, a potential adoptive parent during a visit or trial placement with a juvenile in the custody of a department, any person such as a house parent or cottage parent who has primary responsibility for supervising a juvenile's health and welfare in a residential child care facility or residential educational facility, or any employee or volunteer of a division, institution, or school operated by the

Department of Health and Human Services. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to impose a legal duty of support under Chapter 50 or Chapter 110 of the General Statutes. The duty imposed upon a caretaker as defined in this subdivision shall be for the purpose of this Subchapter only.

- (4) Clerk. – Any clerk of superior court, acting clerk, or assistant or deputy clerk.
- (5) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-129, s. 1, effective October 1, 2013, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date.
- (6) Court. – The district court division of the General Court of Justice.
- (7) Court of competent jurisdiction. – A court having the power and authority of law to act at the time of acting over the subject matter of the cause.
- (7a) Criminal history. – A local, State, or federal criminal history of conviction or pending indictment of a crime, whether a misdemeanor or a felony, involving violence against a person.
- (8) Custodian. – The person or agency that has been awarded legal custody of a juvenile by a court.
- (8a) **(Effective until March 1, 2019)** Department. – Each county's child welfare agency. Unless the context clearly implies otherwise, when used in this Subchapter, "department" or "department of social services" shall refer to the county agency providing child welfare services, regardless of the name of the agency or whether the county has consolidated human services, pursuant to G.S. 153A-77.
- (8a) **(Effective March 1, 2019)** Department. – Each county's child welfare agency. Unless the context clearly implies otherwise, when used in this Subchapter, "department" or "department of social services" shall refer to the county agency providing child welfare services, regardless of the name of the agency or whether the county has consolidated human services, pursuant to G.S. 153A-77 and shall include a regional social services department created pursuant to Part 2B of Article 1 of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes.
- (9) Dependent juvenile. – A juvenile in need of assistance or placement because (i) the juvenile has no parent, guardian, or custodian responsible for the juvenile's care or supervision or (ii) the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian is unable to provide for the juvenile's care or supervision and lacks an appropriate alternative child care arrangement.
- (10) **(Effective until March 1, 2019)** Director. – The director of the county department of social services in the county in which the juvenile resides or is found, or the director's representative as authorized in G.S. 108A-14.
- (10) **(Effective March 1, 2019)** Director. – The director of the department of social services in the county in which the juvenile resides or is found, or the director's representative as authorized in G.S. 108A-14.
- (11) District. – Any district court district as established by G.S. 7A-133.

- (11a) Family assessment response. – A response to selected reports of child neglect and dependency as determined by the Director using a family-centered approach that is protection and prevention oriented and that evaluates the strengths and needs of the juvenile's family, as well as the condition of the juvenile.
- (11b) Investigative assessment response. – A response to reports of child abuse and selected reports of child neglect and dependency as determined by the Director using a formal information gathering process to determine whether a juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent.
- (12) Judge. – Any district court judge.
- (13) Judicial district. – Any district court district as established by G.S. 7A-133.
- (14) Juvenile. – A person who has not reached the person's eighteenth birthday and is not married, emancipated, or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- (15) Neglected juvenile. – Any juvenile less than 18 years of age (i) who is found to be a minor victim of human trafficking under G.S. 14-43.15 or (ii) whose parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker does not provide proper care, supervision, or discipline; or who has been abandoned; or who is not provided necessary medical care; or who is not provided necessary remedial care; or who lives in an environment injurious to the juvenile's welfare; or the custody of whom has been unlawfully transferred under G.S. 14-321.2; or who has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law. In determining whether a juvenile is a neglected juvenile, it is relevant whether that juvenile lives in a home where another juvenile has died as a result of suspected abuse or neglect or lives in a home where another juvenile has been subjected to abuse or neglect by an adult who regularly lives in the home.
- (15a) Nonrelative kin. – An individual having a substantial relationship with the juvenile. In the case of a juvenile member of a State-recognized tribe as set forth in G.S. 143B-407(a), nonrelative kin also includes any member of a State-recognized tribe or a member of a federally recognized tribe, whether or not there is a substantial relationship with the juvenile.
- (16) Petitioner. – The individual who initiates court action, whether by the filing of a petition or of a motion for review alleging the matter for adjudication.
- (17) Prosecutor. – The district attorney or assistant district attorney assigned by the district attorney to juvenile proceedings.
- (18) Reasonable efforts. – The diligent use of preventive or reunification services by a department of social services when a juvenile's remaining at home or returning home is consistent with achieving a safe, permanent home for the juvenile within a reasonable period of time. If a court of competent jurisdiction determines that the juvenile is not to be returned

home, then reasonable efforts means the diligent and timely use of permanency planning services by a department of social services to develop and implement a permanent plan for the juvenile.

- (18a) Responsible individual. – A parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker who abuses or seriously neglects a juvenile.
- (18b) Return home or reunification. – Placement of the juvenile in the home of either parent or placement of the juvenile in the home of a guardian or custodian from whose home the child was removed by court order.
- (19) Safe home. – A home in which the juvenile is not at substantial risk of physical or emotional abuse or neglect.
- (19a) Serious neglect. – Conduct, behavior, or inaction of the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker that evidences a disregard of consequences of such magnitude that the conduct, behavior, or inaction constitutes an unequivocal danger to the juvenile's health, welfare, or safety, but does not constitute abuse.
- (20) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-129, s. 1, effective October 1, 2013, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date.
- (21) Substantial evidence. – Relevant evidence a reasonable mind would accept as adequate to support a conclusion.
- (22) Working day. – Any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or a legal holiday when the courthouse is closed for transactions.

The singular includes the plural, the masculine singular includes the feminine singular and masculine and feminine plural unless otherwise specified. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1981, c. 336; c. 359, s. 2; c. 469, ss. 1-3; c. 716, s. 1; 1985, c. 648; c. 757, s. 156(q); 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 16; 1987, c. 162; c. 695; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, ss. 36, 37; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 815, s. 1; 1991, c. 258, s. 3; c. 273, s. 11; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 3; 1993, c. 324, s. 1; c. 516, ss. 1-3; 1997-113, s. 1; 1997-390, s. 3; 1997-390, s. 3.2; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 1997-506, s. 30; 1998-202, s. 6; 1998-229, ss. 1, 18; 1999-190, s. 1; 1999-318, s. 1; 1999-456, s. 60; 2005-55, s. 1; 2005-399, s. 1; 2009-38, s. 1; 2010-90, ss. 1, 2; 2011-183, s. 2; 2012-153, s. 2; 2013-129, s. 1; 2013-368, s. 16; 2015-123, s. 1; 2015-136, s. 1; 2015-181, s. 21; 2016-94, s. 12C.1(d); 2016-115, s. 3; 2017-41, s. 4.3; 2018-68, ss. 8.1(a), (b); 2018-75, s. 5(a).)